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SUBJECT: NATIONAL 4-H/MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE EXCHANGE

REF:

1. DESPITE SOME SHORTCOMINGS THE FIRST GROUP OF POLISH AGRICULTURAL TRAINEES IN THE US UNDER THE NEW 4-H EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH POLAND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A SUCCESS. 100 YOUNG POLISH AGRICULTURAL PROFESSIONALS IN THEIR MID-20S ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES 13 MONTHS AGO FOR PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE ON AMERICAN FAMILY FARMS. NINE RETURNED HOME EARLY, APPARENTLY DUE TO POOR SELECTION OR PROBLEMS IN ADJUSTMENT AFTER ARRIVAL; 91 FINISHED THE FULL 13-MONTH PROGRAM, EACH HAVING LIVED ON THREE AMERICAN FARMS. THIS MUST BE THE LARGEST SINGLE-YEAR EXCHANGE PROGRAM BETWEEN POLAND AND THE US, AND ITS SUCCESS IS DUE TO THE DEDICATION
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AND HARD WORK ON THE PART OF THE NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL AND THE POLISH EMBASSY. POLISH AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE DR. JERZY RASINSKI, HIMSELF A 1963 PARTICIPANT IN A SIMILAR PROGRAM CONDUCTED BY THE BRETHERN SERVICE COMMISSION, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE ON THE POLISH SIDE.

2. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS ON

THE PROGRAM GATHERED INFORMALLY AND AT RANDOM BY CU/EE DIRECTOR FROM PARTICIPANTS, 4-H STAFFERS AND POLISH EMBASSY OFFICERS AT FINAL BANQUET IN WASHINGTON APRIL 27. POLISH EMBASSY APPEARS DELIGHTED WITH THE PROGRAM'S SUCCESS AND LOOKS FORWARD TO ITS CONTINUATION. THIS VIEW IS SHARED BY THE 4-H COUNCIL AND OFFICERS OF MASSEY-FERGUSON WHICH PROVIDED A SUBSTANTIAL GRANT (EXACT AMOUNT NOT KNOWN) IN SUPPORT. NO USG FUNDS WERE INVOLVED.

3. REACTION OF THE POLISH PARTICIPANTS WAS MIXED. RANDOM CONVERSATIONS DURING THE PRE-DINNER RECEPTION DISCLOSED THAT MOST FEEL THE EXPERIENCE WAS USEFUL. THEY LEARNED MUCH ABOUT AMERICAN FARMING AND LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH MOST ARRIVED IN THE US WITH LITTLE OR NO ENGLISH, THEY ARE ALL LEAVING WITH A SUPRISINGLY GOOD WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH. THERE WAS HOWEVER UNIVERSAL DISAPPOINTMENT AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS OVER THE LACK OF A SCHOLARLY PROGRAM, AND MANY RESENT HAVING HAD TO PERFORM MANUAL LABOR ON THE FARMS. THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLE, CONSIDERING THAT MOST IF NOT ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS APPEAR TO BE GRADUATES OF POLISH HIGHER SCHOOLS AND HAVE BEEN WORKING PROFESSIONALLY FOR THREE TO FIVE YEARS SINCE GRADUATION IN VARIOUS BRANCHES OF AGRICULTURE. 4-H OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE THIS DISAPPOINTMENT BUT POINT OUT THAT IT WAS MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR TO THE POLISH SPONSORS THAT THIS WAS TO BE A PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE AND NOT A SCHOLARLY EXCHANGE. PERHAPS THIS WAS NOT MADE CLEAR ON THE POLISH SIDE BEFORE THE GROUP DEPARTED POLAND. 4-H OFFICIALS SAY THEY TRIED TO LIMIT TO 40 PERCENT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION. THE POLISH SIDE FINALLY AGREED TO 65 PERCENT, BUT THE ACTUAL PERCENTAGE WAS CLOSER TO 100. 4-H OFFICIALS ALSO FEEL THE BRIEFING IN POLAND PRIOR TO DEPARTURE WAS NOT ADEQUATE BUT BELIEVE THIS WILL BE IMPROVED FOR THE NEXT GROUP.

4. 4-H SEES THIS AS A SELF-FUNDED PROGRAM. US HOST FARM FAMILIES PAY A FLAT FEE OF \$500 PER MONTH DIRECTLY TO THE 4-H COUNCIL, WHICH IN TURN PAID A \$65 PER MONTH STIPEND TO THE POLES, IN ADDITION TO THE ROOM AND BOARD PROVIDED BY THE HOST FARMERS. THE REMAINDER OF THE REMITTANCES WERE USED TO COVER PROGRAM COSTS. A RESULTANT SURPLUS, SLIGHTLY IN EXCESS OF \$1,000 PER PERSON FOR THE YEAR, WAS ALSO GIVEN TO THE PARTICIPANTS. AS A CONSEQUENCE THERE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS. AFTER A BRUTALLY SEVERE WINTER, FOR WHICH MOST OF THE POLES WERE NOT PREPARED, MANY OF THEM MANAGED TO TRAVEL TO FLORIDA FOR TWO WEEKS. ON THESE TRIPS THEY USED THE INGENUITY CHARACTERISTIC OF POLISH

STUDENTS IN THE US, JOINING TOGETHER TO RENT CARS AND CAMPERS. CONSEQUENTLY THEY SAW QUITE A BIT OF THE US.

5. A SECOND GROUP OF 30 POLES ARRIVED IN THE US IN DECEMBER 1976 AND A THIRD GROUP OF 94 ARRIVED IN MARCH 1977. BOTH GROUPS WILL STAY FOR ONE YEAR. TWENTY-THREE AMERICANS WERE IN POLAND ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE PROGRAM DURING 1976. THE US PARTICIPANTS FOR 1977 WILL BE SELECTED IN MAY.

6. ANY COMMENTS EMBASSY MAY BE ABLE TO SOLICIT FROM POLISH PARTICIPANTS OR SPONSOR ORGANIZATIONS WOULD BE APPRECIATED. THE POLISH SPONSORS ARE THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE POLISH SOCIETY OF AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY ENGINEERS (SITR) AND THE UNION OF SOCIALIST RURAL YOUTH (ZSMP).

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